

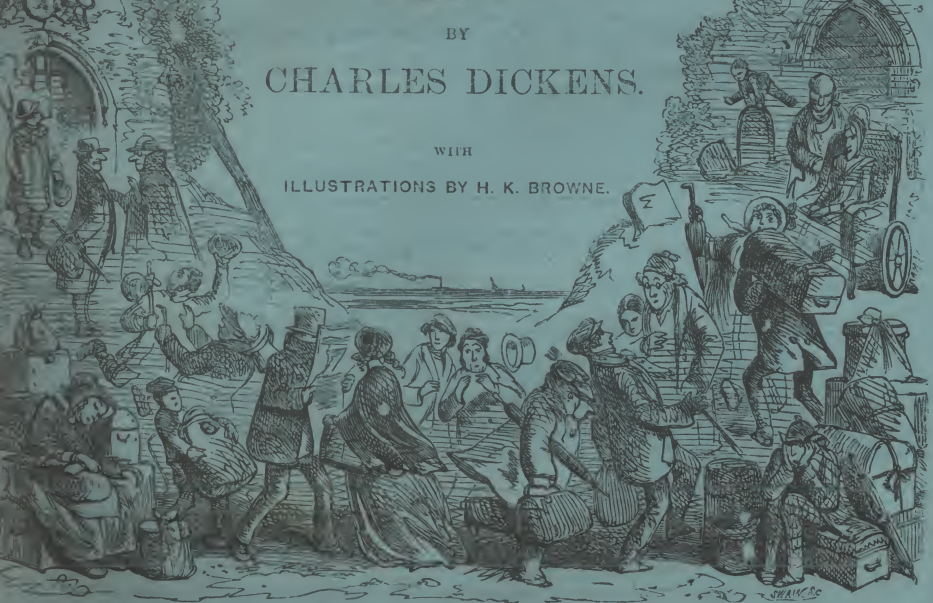


BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH

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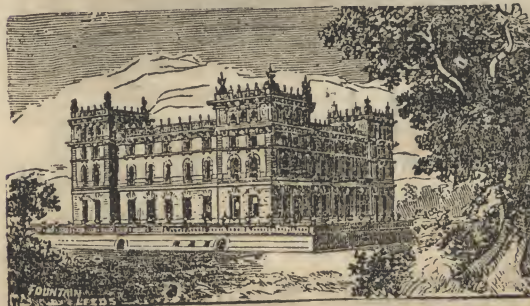
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Table Forks, per dozen	1	10	0	2	0	0	2	16	0
Dessert ditto	1	0	0	1	10	0	2	0	0
Table Spoons	1	10	0	2	0	0	2	18	0
Dessert ditto	1	0	0	1	10	0	2	2	0
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ORDERS ABOVE £2 DELIVERED CARRIAGE FREE PER RAIL.

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HANDSOME BRONZED FENDERS, 10s. AND 12s. 6d. EACH.

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Have the honour to announce to the NOBILITY, GENTRY, and the PUBLIC, that they have purchased the business of the SPONSALIA from Mr. W. C. JAY, with its varied and magnificent Stock of

**MANTLES, MILLINERY, FLOWERS, LACE, SILK SKIRTS,
EVENING DRESSES, PARASOLS, FANCY GOODS, &c.**

The object of the Proprietors is to supply the simply elegant as well as the greatest novelties in
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THE LINEN ROOMS,

which are appropriated exclusively to the sale of Morning Dresses, and all kinds of Underclothing for Ladies, will be found replete with every description of Plain and Useful Made-up Goods, as well as with those of elaborate workmanship, including those clever French inventions in Petticoats, &c., which are now so universally worn by the Parisiennes.

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Form a very considerable portion of the amount of business done in these Rooms, which are under the management of experienced women.

The PRICE of every Article in the Establishment will be marked
in PLAIN FIGURES ;

And various other arrangements are in course of organisation, which cannot fail to establish unlimited confidence in the new firm of

JAY AND SMITH.

THE BERNOUS A LA BEDOUIN.

THESE graceful ARAB CLOAKS, the acknowledged Novelties of the day, and which were FIRST introduced by the PROPRIETORS of the SPONSALIA, in magnificently ornamented styles, for the Opera and Full dress costume, are now being made at the suggestion of many of their Noble Patrons, in a variety of plain and elegant woollen materials, of beautiful texture, for the promenade or sea-side. Three sizes for young ladies have also been arranged in tasteful simplicity. Orders from the country will be promptly attended to, when accompanied by a reference to a resident in town. A book, explanatory of the Outfitting and other Departments in this Establishment, will be sent (post free) on application.

DR. DE JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL.

Entirely free from nauseous flavour and after-taste, is administered with speedy and marked success in Cases of
Consumption, Bronchitis, Asthma, Gout, Rheumatism, Sciatica, Diabetes, Diseases of the Skin,
Neuralgia, Rickets, Infantile Wasting, General Debility, and all Scrofulous Affections.

Specially rewarded by the Governments of BELGIUM and THE NETHERLANDS, and expressly sanctioned by the
ROYAL SANITARY POLICE OF PRUSSIA.

Approved of and recommended for its purity and superiority over every other preparation by BERZELIUS,
FOQUIER, Drs JONATHAN PEREIRA, HASSALL, LETHBR, SHERIDAN MUSPRATT, GRANVILLE, the "Lancet,"
and innumerable other British and Foreign scientific authorities and distinguished physicians.

Has almost entirely superseded all other kinds on the Continent, in consequence of its proved superior power and
efficacy—alleviating suffering and effecting a cure much more rapidly than any other kind.

Contains iodine, phosphate of lime, volatile fatty acids, the elements of the bile—in short, all the most active and
essential curative properties—in larger quantities than the Pale Oils manufactured in Great Britain and Newfound-
land, mainly deprived of these by their mode of preparation.

CERTIFICATE FROM THE ROYAL SANITARY POLICE OF PRUSSIA.

"In answer to your letter of the 2nd ult., requesting permission to sell Dr. DE JONGH'S Cod Liver Oil in bottles,
accompanied by his stamp and signature, the Royal Police of Prussia (Königliches-polizei-Praesidium) has the
honour of informing you that it has caused the Oil to be submitted to an official investigation, and that the result of
such investigation has proved it to be not only the genuine Cod Liver Oil, but, still further, that it is of a kind which
distinguishes itself from the Cod Liver Oil in ordinary use, alike by its taste and chemical composition. Considering,
moreover, that it has come to their knowledge that physicians generally recommend the use of Dr. DE JONGH'S Oil
in preference to the Cod Liver Oil in ordinary use, the Royal Police accedes to your request.

"Berlin, Jan. 23, 1851.
"To A. M. Blume, Chemist, Berlin."

"KÖNIGLICHES-POLIZEI-PRAESIDIUM."
"1^{te} Abtheilung."

Sold Wholesale and Retail, in bottles capsuled and labelled with Dr. DE JONGH'S Stamp and Signature,
WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE, by ANSAR, HAFORD, AND CO., sole British Consignees,
77, Strand, London; and by many respectable Chemists throughout the United Kingdom. Half-pints (10 ounces),
2s. 6d.; Pints (20 ounces), 4s. 9d.; Quarts (40 ounces), 9s.

Imperial Measure.

PARASOLS.

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BEG respectfully to inform the No-
bility and Gentry that they are prepared
to offer to their notice, under the name of the
PERSIAN, the most novel Parasol ever
manufactured in this country, and for which
they have just obtained Her Majesty's Letters
Patent.

These Parasols are made of a peculiar silk
fabric, without any seam whatever, and are
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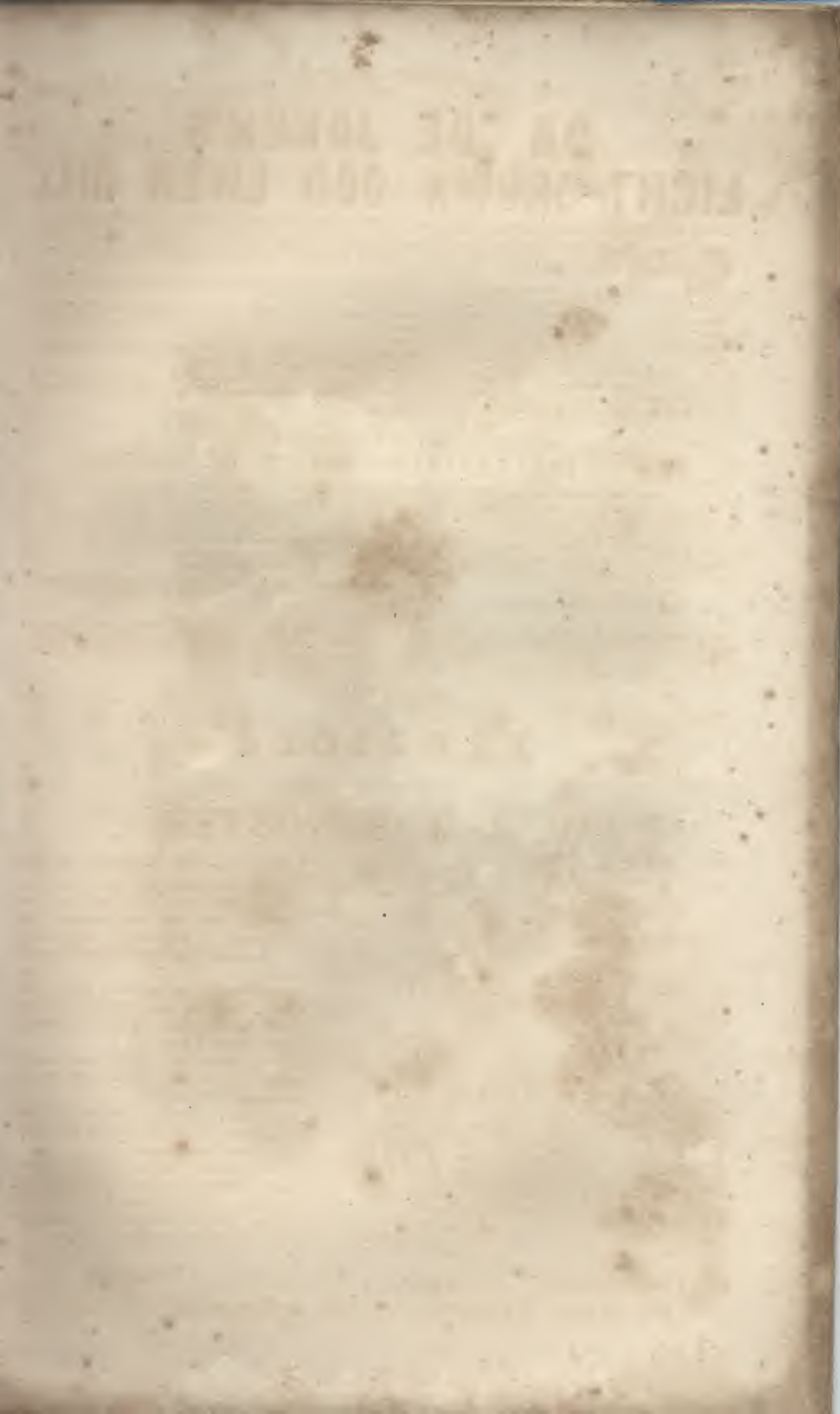
The "Persian" will be found to be in every
respect the most unique and elegant Parasol
ever offered to the public.

They may be purchased wholesale of their
sole Licensees, Messrs. MORLAND & SON, East-
cheap, and of the Patentees.

W. & J. S. beg to call attention to their
SILK UMBRELLAS ON FOX'S PATENT
PARAGON FRAMES, which they undertake
to repair gratis, if necessary, when purchased
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140, REGENT STREET;
94, FLEET STREET;

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75, CHEAPSIDE.





The Penurious Entertainment



Mr. Funtwinch has a mild attack of irritability



CHAPTER XXX.

THE WORD OF A GENTLEMAN.

WHEN Mr. and Mrs. Flintwinch panted up to the door of the old house in the twilight, Jeremiah within a second of Affery, the stranger started back. "Death of my soul!" he exclaimed. "Why, how did you get here?"

Mr. Flintwinch, to whom these words were spoken, repaid the stranger's wonder in full. He gazed at him with blank astonishment; he looked over his own shoulder, as expecting to see some one he had not been aware of standing behind him; he gazed at the stranger again, speechlessly at a loss to know what he meant; he looked to his wife for explanation; receiving none, he pounced upon her, and shook her with such heartiness that he shook her cap off her head, saying between his teeth, with grim raillery, as he did it, "Affery, my woman, you must have a dose, my woman! This is some of your tricks! You have been dreaming again, mistress. What's it about? Who is it? What does it mean? Speak out or be choked! It's the only choice I'll give you."

Supposing Mistress Affery to have any power of election at the moment, her choice was decidedly to be choked; for she answered not a syllable to this adjuration, but, with her bare head wagging violently backwards and forwards, resigned herself to her punishment. The stranger, however, picking up her cap with an air of gallantry, interposed.

"Permit me," said he, laying his hand on the shoulder of Jeremiah, who stopped, and released his victim. "Thank you. Excuse me. Husband and wife I know, from this playfulness. Haha! Always agreeable to see that relation playfully maintained. Listen! May I suggest that somebody up-stairs, in the dark, is becoming energetically curious to know what is going on here?"

This reference to Mrs. Clennam's voice reminded Mr. Flintwinch to step into the hall and call up the staircase. "It's all right, I am here, Affery is coming with your light." Then he said to the latter flustered woman, who was putting her cap on, "Get out with you, and get up-stairs!" and then turned to the stranger, and said to him, "Now, sir, what might you please to want?"

"I am afraid," said the stranger, "I must be so troublesome as to propose a candle."

"True," assented Jeremiah. "I was going to do so. Please to stand where you are, while I get one."

The visitor was standing in the doorway, but turned a little into the gloom of the house as Mr. Flintwinch turned, and pursued him with his eyes into the little room, where he groped about for a phosphorus box. When he found it, it was damp, or otherwise out of order; and match after match that he struck into it lighted sufficiently

to throw a dull glare about his groping face, and to sprinkle his hands with pale little spots of fire, but not sufficiently to light the candle. The stranger, taking advantage of this fitful illumination of his visage, looked intently and wonderingly at him. Jeremiah, when he at last lighted the candle, knew he had been doing this, by seeing the last shade of a lowering watchfulness clear away from his face, as it broke into the doubtful smile that was a large ingredient in its expression.

"Be so good," said Jeremiah, closing the house door, and taking a pretty sharp survey of the smiling visitor in his turn, "as to step into my counting-house.—It's all right, I tell you!" petulantly breaking off to answer the voice up-stairs, still unsatisfied, though Affery was there, speaking in persuasive tones. "Don't I tell you it's all right? Preserve the woman, has she no reason at all in her!"

"Timorous," remarked the stranger.

"Timorous?" said Mr. Flintwinch, turning his head to retort, as he went before with the candle. "More courageous than ninety men in a hundred, sir, let me tell you."

"Though an invalid?"

"Many years an invalid. Mrs. Clennam. The only one of that name left in the House now. My partner."

Saying something apologetically as he crossed the hall, to the effect that at that time of night they were not in the habit of receiving any one, and were always shut up, Mr. Flintwinch led the way into his own office, which presented a sufficiently business-like appearance. Here he put the light on his desk, and said to the stranger, with his wryest twist upon him, "Your commands."

"My name is Blandois."

"Blandois. I don't know it," said Jeremiah.

"I thought it possible," resumed the other, "that you might have been advised from Paris——"

"We have had no advice from Paris, respecting anybody of the name of Blandois," said Jeremiah.

"No?"

"No."

Jeremiah stood in his favourite attitude. The smiling Mr. Blandois, opening his cloak to get his hand to a breast pocket, paused to say, with a laugh in his glittering eyes, which it occurred to Mr. Flintwinch were too near together:

"You are so like a friend of mine! Not so identically the same as I supposed when I really did for the moment take you to be the same in the dusk—for which I ought to apologise; permit me to do so; a readiness to confess my errors is, I hope, a part of the frankness of my character—still, however, uncommonly like."

"Indeed?" said Jeremiah, perversely. "But I have not received any letter of advice from anywhere, respecting anybody of the name of Blandois."

"Just so," said the stranger.

"Just so," said Jeremiah.

Mr. Blandois, not at all put out by this omission on the part of the correspondents of the house of Clennam and Co, took his pocket-book

from his breast pocket, selected a letter from that receptacle, and handed it to Mr. Flintwinch. "No doubt you are well acquainted with the writing. Perhaps the letter speaks for itself, and requires no advice. You are a far more competent judge of such affairs than I am. It is my misfortune to be, not so much a man of business, as what the world calls (arbitrarily) a gentleman."

Mr. Flintwinch took the letter, and read, under date of Paris, "We have to present to you, on behalf of a highly-esteemed correspondent of our Firm, M. Blandois, of this city," &c. &c. "Such facilities as he may require and such attentions as may lie in your power," &c. &c. "Also have to add that if you will honor M. Blandois' drafts at sight to the extent of, say Fifty Pounds sterling (£50)," &c. &c.

"Very good, sir," said Mr. Flintwinch. "Take a chair. To the extent of anything that our house can do—we are in a retired, old-fashioned, steady way of business, sir—we shall be happy to render you our best assistance. I observe, from the date of this, that we could not yet be advised of it. Probably you came over with the delayed mail that brings the advice."

"That I came over with the delayed mail, sir," returned Mr. Blandois, passing his white hand down his high-hooked nose, "I know to the cost of my head and stomach: the detestable and intolerable weather having racked them both. You see me in the plight in which I came out of the Packet within this half hour. I ought to have been here hours ago, and then I should not have to apologise—permit me to apologise—for presenting myself so unseasonably, and frightening—no, by-the-by, you said not frightening; permit me to apologise again—the esteemed lady, Mrs. Clennam, in her invalid chamber above stairs."

Swagger, and an air of authorised condescension, do so much, that Mr. Flintwinch had already begun to think this a highly gentlemanly personage. Not the less unyielding with him on that account, he scraped his chin and said, what could he have the honor of doing for Mr. Blandois to-night, out of business hours?

"Faith!" returned that gentleman, shrugging his cloaked shoulders, "I must change, and eat and drink, and be lodged somewhere. Have the kindness to advise me, a total stranger, where, and money is a matter of perfect indifference, until to-morrow. The nearer the place, the better. Next door, if that's all."

Mr. Flintwinch was slowly beginning, "For a gentleman of your habits, there is not in this immediate neighbourhood any hotel—" when Mr. Blandois took him up.

"So much for my habits! my dear sir," snapping his fingers. "A citizen of the world has no habits. That I am, in my poor way, a gentleman, by Heaven! I will not deny, but I have no unaccommodating prejudiced habits. A clean room, a hot dish for dinner, and a bottle of not absolutely poisonous wine, are all I want to-night. But I want that much, without the trouble of going one unnecessary inch to get it."

"There is," said Mr. Flintwinch, with more than his usual deliberation, as he met, for a moment, Mr. Blandois' shining eyes, which were restless; "there is a coffee-house and tavern close

here, which, so far, I can recommend; but there's no style about it."

"I dispense with style!" said Mr. Blandois, waving his hand. "Do me the honor to show me the house, and introduce me there (if I am not too troublesome), and I shall be infinitely obliged."

Mr. Flintwinch, upon this, looked up his hat, and lighted Mr. Blandois across the hall again. As he put the candle on a bracket, where the dark old pannelling almost served as an extinguisher for it, he bethought himself of going up to tell the invalid that he would not be absent five minutes.

"Oblige me," said the visitor, on his saying so, "by presenting my card of visit. Do me the favor to add, that I shall be happy to wait on Mrs. Clennam, to offer my personal compliments, and to apologise for having occasioned any agitation in this tranquil corner, if it should suit her convenience to endure the presence of a stranger for a few minutes, after he shall have changed his wet clothes and fortified himself with something to eat and drink."

Jeremiah made all dispatch, and said, on his return, "She'll be glad to see you, sir; but, being conscious that her sick room has no attractions, wishes me to say that she won't hold you to your offer, in case you should think better of it."

"To think better of it," returned the gallant Blandois, "would be to slight a lady; to slight a lady would be to be deficient in chivalry towards the sex; and chivalry towards the sex is a part of my character!" Thus expressing himself, he threw the dragged skirt of his cloak over his shoulder, and accompanied Mr. Flintwinch to the tavern; taking up on the road a porter, who was waiting with his portmanteau on the outer side of the gateway.

The house was kept in a homely manner, and the condescension of Mr. Blandois was infinite. It seemed to fill to inconvenience the little bar, in which the widow landlady and her two daughters received him; it was much too big for the narrow wainscoted room with a bagatelle-board in it, that was first proposed for his reception; it perfectly swamped the little private holiday sitting-room of the family, which was finally given up to him. Here, in dry clothes and scented linen, with sleeked hair, a great ring on each fore-finger, and a massive show of watch-chain, Mr. Blandois waiting for his dinner, lolling on a window-seat with his knees drawn up, looked (for all the difference in the setting of the jewel) fearfully and wonderfully like a certain Monsieur Rigaud who had once so waited for his breakfast, lying on the stone ledge of the iron grating of a cell in a villanous dungeon at Marseilles.

His greed at dinner, too, was closely in keeping with the greed of Monsieur Rigaud at breakfast. His avaricious manner of collecting all the catables about him, and devouring some with his eyes, while devouring others with his jaws, was the same manner. His utter disregard of other people, as shown in his way of tossing the little womanly toys of furniture about, flinging favorite cushions under his boots for a softer rest, and crushing delicate coverings with his big body and his great black head, had the same brute selfishness at the bottom of it. The softly moving hands that were so busy among the dishes had

the old wicked facility of the hands that had clung to the bars. And when he could eat no more, and sat sucking his delicate fingers one by one and wiping them on a cloth, there wanted nothing but the substitution of vine-leaves to finish the picture.

On this man, with his moustache going up and his nose coming down in that most evil of smiles, and with his surface eyes looking as if they belonged to his dyed hair, and had had their natural power of reflecting light stopped by some similar process, Nature, always true, and never working in vain, had set the mark, Beware! It was not her fault, if the warning were fruitless. She is never to blame in any such instance.

Mr. Blandois, having finished his repast and cleaned his fingers, took a cigar from his pocket, and, lying on the window-seat again, smoked it out at his leisure, occasionally apostrophising the smoke as it parted from his thin lips in a thin stream:

"Blandois, you shall turn the tables on society, my little child. Haha! Holy blue, you have begun well, Blandois! At a pinch, an excellent master in English or French; a man for the bosom of families! You have a quick perception, you have humor, you have ease, you have insinuating manners, you have a good appearance; in effect, you are a gentleman! A gentleman you shall live, my small boy, and a gentleman you shall die. You shall win, however the game goes. They shall all confess your merit, Blandois. You shall subdue the society which has grievously wronged you, to your own high spirit. Death of my soul. You are high-spirited by right and by nature, my Blandois!"

To such soothing murmurs did this gentleman smoke out his cigar and drink out his bottle of wine. Both being finished, he shook himself into a sitting attitude; and with the concluding serious apostrophe, "Hold, then! Blandois, you ingenious one, have all your wits about you!" arose and went back to the house of Clennam and Co.

He was received at the door by Mistress Affery, who, under instructions from her lord, had lighted up two candles in the hall and a third on the staircase, and who conducted him to Mrs. Clennam's room. Tea was prepared there, and such little company arrangements had been made as usually attended the reception of expected visitors. They were slight on the greatest occasion, never extending beyond the production of the China tea-service, and the covering of the bed with a sober and sad drapery. For the rest, there was the bier-like sofa with the block upon it, and the figure in the widow's dress, as if attired for execution; the fire topped by the mound of damped ashes; the grate with its second little mound of ashes; the kettle, and the smell of black dye; all as they had been for fifteen years.

Mr. Flintwinch presented the gentleman commended to the consideration of Clennam and Co. Mrs. Clennam, who had the letter lying before her, bent her head and requested him to sit. They looked very closely at one another. That was but natural curiosity.

"I thank you, sir, for thinking of a disabled woman like me. Few who come here on business have any remembrance to bestow on one so removed from observation. It would be idle to expect that they should

have. Out of sight, out of mind. When I am grateful for the exception, I don't complain of the rule."

Mr. Blandois, in his most gentlemanly manner, was afraid he had disturbed her by unhappily presenting himself at such an unconscionable time. For which he had already offered his best apologies to Mr. — he begged pardon—but by name had not the distinguished honor—

"Mr. Flintwinch has been connected with the House many years."

Mr. Blandois was Mr. Flintwinch's most obedient humble servant. He entreated Mr. Flintwinch to receive the assurance of his profoundest consideration.

"My husband being dead," said Mrs. Clennam, "and my son preferring another pursuit, our old House has no other representative in these days than Mr. Flintwinch."

"What do you call yourself?" was the surly demand of that gentleman. "You have the head of two men."

"My sex disqualifies me," she proceeded with merely a slight turn of her eyes in Jeremiah's direction, "from taking a responsible part in the business, even if I had the ability; and therefore Mr. Flintwinch combines my interests with his own, and conducts it. It is not what it used to be; but some of our old friends (principally the writers of this letter) have the kindness not to forget us, and we retain the power of doing what they entrust to us as efficiently as we ever did. This however is not interesting to you. You are English, sir?"

"Faith, madam, no; I am neither born nor bred in England. In effect, I am of no country," said Mr. Blandois, stretching out his leg and smiting it: "I descend from half a dozen countries."

"You have been much about the world?"

"It is true. By Heaven, madam, I have been here and there and everywhere!"

"You have no ties, probably. Are not married?"

"Madam," said Mr. Blandois, with an ugly fall of his eyebrows, "I adore your sex, but I am not married—never was."

Mistress Affery, who stood at the table near him, pouring out the tea, happened in her dreamy state to look at him as he said these words, and to fancy that she caught an expression in his eyes which attracted her own eyes so that she could not get them away. The effect of this fancy was, to keep her staring at him with the teapot in her hand, not only to her own great uneasiness, but manifestly to his, too; and, through them both, to Mrs. Clennam's and Mr. Flintwinch's. Thus a few ghostly moments supervened, when they were all confusedly staring without knowing why.

"Affery," her mistress was the first to say, "what is the matter with you?"

"I don't know," said Mistress Affery, with her disengaged left hand extended towards the visitor. "It ain't me. It's him!"

"What does this good woman mean?" cried Mr. Blandois, turning white, hot, and slowly rising with a look of such deadly wrath that it contrasted surprisingly with the slight force of his words. "How is it possible to understand this good creature!"

"It's *not* possible," said Mr. Flintwinch, screwing himself rapidly

in that direction. "She don't know what she means. She's an idiot, a wanderer in her mind. She shall have a dose, she shall have such a dose! Get along with you, my woman," he added in her ear, "get along with you, while you know you're Affery, and before you're shaken to yeast."

Mistress Affery, sensible of the danger in which her identity stood, relinquished the teapot as her husband seized it, put her apron over her head, and in a twinkling vanished. The visitor gradually broke into a smile, and sat down again.

"You'll excuse her, Mr. Blandois," said Jeremiah, pouring out the tea himself; "she's failing and breaking up; that's what she's about. Do you take sugar, sir?"

"Thank you; no tea for me.—Pardon my observing it, but that's a very remarkable watch!"

The tea-table was drawn up near the sofa, with a small interval between it and Mrs. Clennam's own particular table. Mr. Blandois in his gallantry had risen to hand that lady her tea (her dish of toast was already there), and it was in placing the cup conveniently within her reach that the watch, lying before her as it always did, attracted his attention. Mrs. Clennam looked suddenly up at him.

"May I be permitted? Thank you. A fine old-fashioned watch," he said, taking it in his hand. "Heavy for use, but massive and genuine. I have a partiality for everything genuine. Such as I am, I am genuine myself. Hah! A gentleman's watch with two cases in the old fashion. May I remove it from the outer case? Thank you. Aye? An old silk watch-lining, worked with beads! I have often seen these among old Dutch people and Belgians. Quaint things!"

"They are old-fashioned too," said Mrs. Clennam.

"Very. But this is not as old as the watch, I think?"

"I think not."

"Extraordinary how they used to complicate these cyphers!" remarked Mr. Blandois, glancing up with his own smile again. "Now, is this D. N. F.? It might be almost anything."

"Those are the letters."

Mr. Flintwinch, who had been observantly pausing all this time with a cup of tea in his hand, and his mouth open ready to swallow the contents, began to do so: always entirely filling his mouth before he emptied it at a gulp; and always deliberating again before he refilled it.

"D. N. F. was some tender lovely fascinating fair-creature, I make no doubt," observed Mr. Blandois, as he snapped on the case again. "I adore her memory on the assumption. Unfortunately for my peace of mind, I adore but too readily. It may be a vice, it may be a virtue, but adoration of female beauty and merit constitutes three parts of my character, madam."

Mr. Flintwinch had by this time poured himself out another cup of tea, which he was swallowing in gulps as before, with his eyes directed to the invalid.

"You may be heart-free here, sir," she returned to Mr. Blandois. "Those letters are not intended, I believe, for the initials of any name."

"Of a motto perhaps," said Mr. Blandois, casually.

"Of a sentence. They have always stood, I believe, for *Do Not Forget!*"

"And naturally," said Mr. Blandois, replacing the watch, and stepping backward to his former chair, "you do *not* forget."

Mr. Flintwinch, finishing his tea, not only took a longer gulp than he had taken yet, but made his succeeding pause under new circumstances: that is to say, with his head thrown back and his cup still held at his lips, while his eyes were still directed at the invalid. She had that force of face, and that concentrated air of collecting her firmness or obstinacy, which represented in her case what would have been gesture and action in another, as she replied with her deliberate strength of speech:

"No, sir, I do not forget. To lead a life as monotonous as mine has been during many years, is not the way to forget. To lead a life of self-correction, is not the way to forget. To be sensible of having (as we all have, every one of us, all the children of Adam!) offences to expiate and peace to make, does not justify the desire to forget. Therefore I have long dismissed it, and I neither forget nor wish to forget."

Mr. Flintwinch, who had latterly been shaking the sediment at the bottom of his tea-cup, round and round, here gulped it down, and putting the cup in the tea-tray, as done with, turned his eyes upon Mr. Blandois, as if to ask him what he thought of that?

"All expressed, madam," said Mr. Blandois, with his smoothest bow and his white hand on his breast, "by the word '*naturally*,' which I am proud to have had sufficient apprehension and appreciation (but without appreciation I could not be Blandois) to employ."

"Pardon me, sir," she returned, "if I doubt the likelihood of a gentleman of pleasure, and change, and politeness, accustomed to court and to be courted—"

"Oh madam! By Heaven!"

"—If I doubt the likelihood of such a character, quite comprehending what belongs to mine in my circumstances. Not to obtrude doctrine upon you," she looked at the rigid pile of hard pale books before her, "(for you go your own way, and the consequences are on your own head), I will say this much: that I shape my course by pilots, strictly by proved and tried pilots, under whom I cannot be shipwrecked—can not be—and that if I were unmindful of the admonition conveyed in those three letters, I should not be half as chastened as I am."

It was curious how she seized the occasion to argue with some invisible opponent. Perhaps with her own better sense, always turning upon herself and her own deception.

"If I forgot my ignorances in my life of health and freedom, I might complain of the life to which I am now condemned. I never do; I never have done. If I forgot that this scene, the Earth, is expressly meant to be a scene of gloom, and hardship, and dark trial, for the creatures who are made out of its dust, I might have some tenderness for its vanities. But I have no such tenderness. If I did

not know that we are, every one, the subject (most justly the subject) of a wrath that must be satisfied, and against which mere actions are nothing, I might repine at the difference between me, imprisoned here, and the people who pass that gateway yonder. But I take it as a grace and favor to be elected to make the satisfaction I am making here, to know what I know for certain here, and to work out what I have worked out here. My affliction might otherwise have had no meaning to me. Hence I would forget, and I do forget, nothing. Hence I am contented, and say it is better with me than with millions."

As she spoke these words, she put her hand upon the watch, and restored it to the precise spot on her little table which it always occupied. With her touch lingering upon it, she sat for some moments afterwards, looking at it steadily and half-defiantly.

Mr. Blandois, during this exposition, had been strictly attentive, keeping his eyes fastened on the lady, and thoughtfully stroking his moustache with his two hands. Mr. Flintwinch had been a little fidgetty, and now struck in.

"There, there, there!" said he. "That is quite understood, Mrs. Clennam, and you have spoken piously and well. Mr. Blandois, I suspect, is not of a pious cast."

"On the contrary, sir!" that gentleman protested, snapping his fingers. "Your pardon! It's a part of my character. I am sensitive, ardent, conscientious, and imaginative. A sensitive, ardent, conscientious, and imaginative man, Mr. Flintwinch, must be that, or nothing!"

There was an inkling of suspicion in Mr. Flintwinch's face that he might be nothing, as he swaggered out of his chair (it was characteristic of this man, as it is of all men similarly marked, that whatever he did, he overdid, though it were sometimes by only a hair's-breadth), and approached to take his leave of Mrs. Clennam.

"With what will appear to you the egotism of a sick old woman, sir," she then said, "though really through your accidental allusion, I have been led away into the subject of myself and my infirmities. Being so considerate as to visit me, I hope you will be likewise so considerate as to overlook that. Don't compliment me, if you please." For he was evidently going to do it. "Mr. Flintwinch will be happy to render you any service, and I hope your stay in this city may prove agreeable."

Mr. Blandois thanked her, and kissed his hand several times. "This is an old room," he remarked, with a sudden sprightliness of manner, looking round when he got near the door. "I have been so interested that I have not observed it. But it's a genuine old room."

"It is a genuine old house," said Mrs. Clennam, with her frozen smile. "A place of no pretensions, but a piece of antiquity."

"Faith!" cried the visitor. "If Mr. Flintwinch would do me the favor to take me through the rooms on my way out, he could hardly oblige me more. An old house is a weakness with me. I have many weaknesses, but none greater. I love and study the picturesque, in all its varieties. I have been called picturesque myself. It is no merit to

be picturesque—I have greater merits, perhaps—but I may be, by an accident. Sympathy, sympathy!”

“I tell you beforehand, Mr. Blandois, that you’ll find it very dingy, and very bare,” said Jeremiah, taking up the candle. “It’s not worth your looking at.” But Mr. Blandois, smiting him in a friendly manner on the back, only laughed; so the said Blandois kissed his hand again to Mrs. Clennam, and they went out of the room together.

“You don’t care to go up-stairs?” said Jeremiah, on the landing.

“On the contrary, Mr. Flintwinch; if not tiresome to you, I shall be ravished!”

Mr. Flintwinch, therefore, wormed himself up the staircase, and Mr. Blandois followed close. They ascended to the great garret bedroom, which Arthur had occupied on the night of his return. “There, Mr. Blandois!” said Jeremiah, showing it, “I hope you may think that worth coming so high, to see. I confess I don’t.”

Mr. Blandois being enraptured, they walked through other garrets and passages, and came down the staircase again. By this time, Mr. Flintwinch had remarked that he never found the visitor looking at any room, after throwing one quick glance around, but always found the visitor looking at him, Mr. Flintwinch. With this discovery in his thoughts, he turned about on the staircase for another experiment. He met his eyes directly; and on the instant of their fixing one another, the visitor, with that ugly play of nose and moustache, laughed (as he had done at every similar moment since they left Mrs. Clennam’s chamber) a diabolically silent laugh.

As a much shorter man than the visitor, Mr. Flintwinch was at the physical disadvantage of being thus disagreeably leered at from a height; and as he went first down the staircase, and was usually a step or two lower than the other, this disadvantage was at the time increased. He postponed looking at Mr. Blandois again until this accidental inequality was removed by their having entered the late Mr. Clennam’s room. But, then twisting himself suddenly round upon him, he found his look unchanged.

“A most admirable old house,” smiled Mr. Blandois. “So mysterious. Do you never hear any haunted noises here?”

“Noises,” returned Mr. Flintwinch. “No.”

“Nor see any devils?”

“Not,” said Mr. Flintwinch, grimly screwing himself at his questioner, “not any that introduce themselves under that name and in that capacity.”

“Haha! A portrait here, I see.”

(Still looking at Mr. Flintwinch, as if he were the portrait.)

“It’s a portrait, sir, as you observe.”

“May I ask the subject, Mr. Flintwinch?”

“Mr. Clennam, deceased. Her husband.”

“Former owner of the remarkable watch, perhaps?” said the visitor.

Mr. Flintwinch, who had cast his eyes towards the portrait, twisted himself about again, and again found himself the subject of the same look and smile. “Yes, Mr. Blandois,” he replied tartly. “It

was his, and his uncle's before him, and Lord knows whose before him ; and that's all I can tell you of its pedigree."

"That's a strongly marked character, Mr. Flintwinch, our friend upstairs."

"Yes, sir," said Jeremiah, twisting himself at the visitor again, as he did during the whole of this dialogue, like some screw-machine that fell short of its grip ; for the other never changed, and he always felt obliged to retreat a little. "She is a remarkable woman. Great fortitude—great strength of mind."

"They must have been very happy," said Blandois.

"Who?" demanded Mr. Flintwinch, with another screw at him.

Mr. Blandois shook his right forefinger towards the sick-room, and his left forefinger towards the portrait, and then putting his arms akimbo, and striding his legs wide apart, stood smiling down at Mr. Flintwinch with the advancing nose and the retreating moustache.

"As happy as most other married people, I suppose," returned Mr. Flintwinch. "I can't say. I don't know. There are secrets in all families."

"Secrets!" cried Mr. Blandois, quickly. "Say it again, my son."

"I say," replied Mr. Flintwinch, upon whom he had swelled himself so suddenly that Mr. Flintwinch found his face almost brushed by the dilated chest. "I say there are secrets in all families."

"So there are," cried the other, clapping him on both shoulders, and rolling him backwards and forwards. "Haha! you are right. So there are! Secrets? Holy Blue! There are the devil's own secrets in some families, Mr. Flintwinch!" With that, after clapping Mr. Flintwinch on both shoulders several times, as if, in a friendly and humorous way, he were rallying him on a joke he had made, he threw up his arms, threw back his head, hooked his hands together behind it, and burst into a roar of laughter. It was in vain for Mr. Flintwinch to try another screw at him. He had his laugh out.

"But, favor me with the candle a moment," he said, when he had done. "Let us have a look at the husband of the remarkable lady. Hah!" holding up the light at arm's length. "A decided expression of face here too, though not of the same character. Looks as if he were saying—what is it—Do Not Forget—does he not, Mr. Flintwinch? By Heaven, sir, he does!"

As he returned him the candle, he looked at him once more ; and then, leisurely strolling out with him into the hall, declared it to be a charming old house indeed, and one which had so greatly pleased him, that he would not have missed inspecting it for a hundred pounds.

Throughout these singular freedoms on the part of Mr. Blandois, which involved a general alteration in his demeanour, making it much coarser and rougher, much more violent and audacious, than before, Mr. Flintwinch, whose leathern face was not liable to many changes, preserved its immobility intact. Beyond now appearing, perhaps, to have been left hanging a trifle too long before that friendly operation of cutting down, he outwardly maintained an equable composure.

They had brought their survey to a close in the little room at the side of the hall, and he stood there, eyeing Mr. Blandois.

"I am glad you are so well satisfied, sir," was his calm remark.

"I didn't expect it. You seem to be quite in good spirits."

"In admirable spirits," returned Blandois. "Word of honor! never more refreshed in spirits. Do you ever have presentiments, Mr. Flintwinch?"

"I am not sure that I know what you mean by the term, sir," replied that gentleman.

"Say in this case, Mr. Flintwinch, undefined anticipations of pleasure to come."

"I can't say I am sensible of such a sensation at present," returned Mr. Flintwinch, with the utmost gravity. "If I should find it coming on, I'll mention it."

"Now I," said Blandois, "I, my son, have a presentiment to-night that we shall be well acquainted. Do you find it coming on?"

"N—no," returned Mr. Flintwinch, deliberately enquiring of himself. "I can't say I do."

"I have a strong presentiment that we shall become intimately acquainted.—You have no feeling of that sort yet?"

"Not yet," said Mr. Flintwinch.

Mr. Blandois, taking him by both shoulders again, rolled him about a little in his former merry way, then drew his arm through his own, and invited him to come off and drink a bottle of wine like a dear deep old dog as he was.

Without a moment's indecision, Mr. Flintwinch accepted the invitation, and they went out to the quarters where the traveller was lodged, through a heavy rain which had rattled on the windows, roofs, and pavements, ever since nightfall. The thunder and lightning had long ago passed over, but the rain was furious. On their arrival in Mr. Blandois' room, a bottle of port wine was ordered by that gallant gentleman; who (crushing every pretty thing he could collect, in the soft disposition of his dainty figure) coiled himself upon the window-seat, while Mr. Flintwinch took a chair opposite to him, with the table between them. Mr. Blandois proposed having the largest glasses in the house, to which Mr. Flintwinch assented. The bumpers filled, Mr. Blandois, with a roystering gaiety, clinked the top of his glass against the bottom of Mr. Flintwinch's, and the bottom of his glass against the top of Mr. Flintwinch's, and drank to the intimate acquaintance he foresaw. Mr. Flintwinch gravely pledged him, and drank all the wine he could get, and said nothing. As often as Mr. Blandois clinked glasses (which was at every replenishment), Mr. Flintwinch stolidly did his part of the clinking, and would have stolidly done his companion's part of the wine as well as his own: being, except in the article of palate, a mere cask.

In short, Mr. Blandois found that to pour port wine into the reticent Flintwinch was, not to open him but to shut him up. Moreover, he had the appearance of a perfect ability to go on all night; or, if occasion were, all next day, and all next night; whereas Mr. Blandois soon grew indistinctly conscious of swag-

gering too fiercely and boastfully. He therefore terminated the entertainment at the end of the third bottle.

"You will draw upon us to-morrow, sir?" said Mr. Flintwinch, with a business-like face at parting.

"My Cabbage," returned the other, taking him by the collar with both hands. "I'll draw upon you; have no fear. Adieu, my Flintwinch. Receive at parting;" here he gave him a southern embrace, and kissed him soundingly on both cheeks; "the word of a gentleman! By a thousand Thunders, you shall see me again!"

He did not present himself next day, though the letter of advice came duly to hand. Enquiring after him at night, Mr. Flintwinch found, with surprise, that he had paid his bill and gone back to the Continent by way of Calais. Nevertheless, Jeremiah scraped out of his cogitating face a lively conviction that Mr. Blandois would keep his word on this occasion, and would be seen again.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SPIRIT.

ANYBODY may pass, any day, in the thronged thoroughfares of the metropolis, some meagre, wrinkled, yellow old man (who might be supposed to have dropped from the stars, if there were any star in the Heavens dull enough to be suspected of casting off so feeble a spark), creeping along with a scared air, as though bewildered and a little frightened by the noise and bustle. This old man is always a little old man. If he were ever a big old man, he has shrunk into a little old man; if he were always a little old man, he has dwindled into a less old man. His coat is of a color, and cut, that never was the mode anywhere, at any period. Clearly, it was not made for him, or for any individual mortal. Some wholesale contractor measured Fate for five thousand coats of such quality, and Fate has lent this old coat to this old man, as one of a long unfinished line of many old men. It has always large dull metal buttons, similar to no other buttons. This old man wears a hat, a thumbcd and napless and yet an obdurate hat, which has never adapted itself to the shape of his poor head. His coarse shirt and his coarse neckcloth have no more individuality than his coat and hat; they have the same character of not being his—of not being anybody's. Yet this old man wears these clothes with a certain unaccustomed air of being dressed and elaborated for the public ways; as though he passed the greater part of his time in a nightcap and gown. And so, like the country mouse in the second year of a famine, come to see the town-mouse, and timidly threading his way to the town-mouse's lodging through a city of cats, this old man passes in the streets.

Sometimes, on holidays towards evening, he will be seen to walk with a slightly increased infirmity, and his old eyes will glimmer with

a moist and marshy light. Then the little old man is drunk. A very small measure will overset him; he may be bowled off his unsteady legs with a half-pint pot. Some pitying acquaintance—chance acquaintance very often—has warmed up his weakness with a treat of beer, and the consequence will be the lapse of a longer time than usual before he shall pass again. For, the little old man is going home to the Workhouse; and on his good behaviour they do not let him out often (though methinks they might, considering the few years he has before him to go out in, under the sun); and on his bad behaviour they shut him up closer than ever, in a grove of two score and nineteen more old men, every one of whom smells of all the others.

Mrs. Plornish's father,—a poor little reedy piping old gentleman, like a worn-out bird; who had been in what he called the music-binding business, and met with great misfortunes, and who had seldom been able to make his way, or to see it or to pay it, or to do anything at all with it but find it no thoroughfare,—had retired of his own accord to the Workhouse which was appointed by law to be the Good Samaritan of his district (without the two pence, which was bad political economy), on the settlement of that execution which had carried Mr. Plornish to the Marshalsea College. Previous to his son-in-law's difficulties coming to that head, Old Nandy (he was always so called in his legal Retreat, but he was Old Mr. Nandy among the Bleeding Hearts) had sat in a corner of the Plornish fireside, and taken his bite and sup out of the Plornish cupboard. He still hoped to resume that domestic position, when Fortune should smile upon his son-in-law; in the meantime, while she preserved an immoveable countenance, he was, and resolved to remain, one of these little old men in a grove of little old men with a community of flavour.

But, no poverty in him, and no coat on him that never was the mode, and no Old Men's Ward for his dwelling-place, could quench his daughter's admiration. Mrs. Plornish was as proud of her father's talents as she could possibly have been if they had made him Lord Chancellor. She had as firm a belief in the sweetness and propriety of his manners as she could possibly have had if he had been Lord Chamberlain. The poor little old man knew some pale and vapid little songs, long out of date, about Chloc, and Phyllis, and Strephon being wounded by the son of Venus; and for Mrs. Plornish there was no such music at the Opera, as the small internal flutterings and chirpings wherein he would discharge himself of these ditties, like a weak, little, broken barrel-organ, ground by a baby. On his "days out," those flecks of light in his flat vista of pollard old men, it was at once Mrs. Plornish's delight and sorrow, when he was strong with meat, and had taken his full halfpenny-worth of porter, to say, "Sing us a song, Father." Then would he give them Chloc, and, if he were in pretty good spirits, Phyllis also—Strephon he had hardly been up to, since he went into retirement—and then would Mrs. Plornish declare she did believe there never was such a singer as Father, and wipe her eyes.

If he had come from Court on these occasions, nay, if he had been the noble Refrigerator come home triumphantly from a foreign court to be presented and promoted on his last tremendous failure, Mrs.

Plornish could not have handed him with greater elevation about Bleeding Heart Yard. "Here's Father," she would say, presenting him to a neighbour. "Father will soon be home with us for good, now. Ain't Father looking well? Father's a sweeter singer than ever; you'd never have forgotten it, if you had heard him just now." As to Mr. Plornish, he had married these articles of belief in marrying Mr. Nandy's daughter, and only wondered how it was that so gifted an old gentleman had not made a fortune. This he attributed, after much reflection, to his musical genius not having been scientifically developed in his youth. "For why," argued Mr. Plornish, "why go a binding music when you've got it in yourself? That's where it is, I consider."

Old Nandy had a patron: one patron. He had a patron who, in a certain sumptuous way—an apologetic way, as if he constantly took an admiring audience to witness that he really could not help being more free with this old fellow than they might have expected, on account of his simplicity and poverty—was mightily good to him. Old Nandy had been several times to the Marshalsea College, communicating with his son-in-law during his short durance there; and had happily acquired to himself, and had by degrees and in course of time much improved, the patronage of the Father of that national institution.

Mr. Dorrit was in the habit of receiving this old man, as if the old man held of him in vassalage under some feudal tenure. He made little treats and teas for him, as if he came in with his homage from some outlying district where the tenantry were in a primitive state. It seemed as if there were moments when he could by no means have sworn but that the old man was an ancient retainer of his, who had been meritoriously faithful. When he mentioned him, he spoke of him casually as his old pensioner. He had a wonderful satisfaction in seeing him, and in commenting on his decayed condition after he was gone. It appeared to him amazing that he could hold up his head at all, poor creature. "In the Workhouse, sir, the Union: no privacy, no visitors, no station, no respect, no speciality. Most deplorable!"

It was old Nandy's birthday, and they let him out. He said nothing about its being his birthday, or they might have kept him in; for such old men should not be born. He passed along the streets as usual to Bleeding Heart Yard, and had his dinner with his daughter and son-in-law, and gave them Phyllis. He had hardly concluded, when Little Dorrit looked in to see how they all were.

"Miss Dorrit," said Mrs. Plornish. "Here's Father! Ain't he looking nice? And such voice he's in!"

Little Dorrit gave him her hand, and smilingly said she had not seen him this long time.

"No, they're rather hard on poor Father," said Mrs. Plornish, with a lengthening face, "and don't let him have half as much change and fresh air as would benefit him. But he'll soon be home for good, now. Won't you, Father?"

"Yes, my dear, I hope so. In good time, please God."

Here Mr. Plornish delivered himself of an oration which he invariably made, word for word the same, on all such opportunities. It was couched in the following terms:

"John Edward Nandy. Sir. While there's a ounce of wittles or drink of any sort in this present roof, you're fully welcome to your share on it. While there's a handful of fire or a mouthful of bed in this present roof, you're fully welcome to your share on it. If so be as there should be nothing in this present roof, you should be as welcome to your share on it as if it was something much or little. And this is what I mean and so I don't deceive you, and consequently which is to stand out is to entreat of you, and therefore why not do it?"

To this lucid address, which Mr. Plornish always delivered as if he had composed it (as no doubt he had) with enormous labor, Mrs. Plornish's father pipingly replied :

"I thank you kindly, Thomas, and I know your intentions well, which is the same I thank you kindly for. But no, Thomas. Until such times as it's not to take it out of your children's mouths, which take it is, and call it by what name you will it do remain and equally deprive though may they come and too soon they can not come, no Thomas, no!"

Mrs. Plornish, who had been turning her face a little away with a corner of her apron in her hand, brought herself back to the conversation again, by telling Miss Dorrit that Father was going over the water to pay his respects, unless she knew of any reason why it might not be agreeable.

Her answer was, "I am going straight home, and if he will come with me I shall be so glad to take care of him—so glad," said Little Dorrit, always thoughtful of the feelings of the weak, "of his company."

"There, Father!" cried Mrs. Plornish. "Ain't you a gay young man to be going for a walk along with Miss Dorrit! Let me tie your neck-handkerchief into a regular good bow, for you're a regular beau yourself, Father, if ever there was one."

With this filial joke his daughter smartened him up, and gave him a loving hug, and stood at the door with her weak child in her arms and her strong child tumbling down the steps, looking after her little old father as he toddled away with his arm under Little Dorrit's.

They walked at a slow pace, and Little Dorrit took him by the Iron Bridge and sat him down there for a rest, and they looked over at the water and talked about the shipping, and the old man mentioned what he would do if he had a ship full of gold coming home to him (his plan was to take a noble lodging for the Plornishes and himself at a Tea Gardens, and live there all the rest of their lives, attended on by the waiter), and it was a special birthday for the old man. They were within five minutes of their destination, when, at the corner of her own street, they came upon Fanny in her new bonnet bound for the same port.

"Why, good gracious me, Amy!" cried that young lady starting. "You never mean it!"

"Mean what, Fanny dear?"

"Well! I could have believed a great deal of you," returned the young lady with burning indignation, "but I don't think even I could have believed this, of even you!"

"Fanny!" cried Little Dorrit, wounded and astonished.

"Oh! Don't Fanny me, you mean little thing, don't! The idea of coming along the open streets, in the broad light of day, with a Pauper!" (firing off the last word as if it were a ball from an air-gun.)

"O Fanny!"

"I tell you not to Fanny me, for I'll not submit to it! I never knew such a thing. The way in which you are resolved and determined to disgrace us, on all occasions, is really infamous. You had better take care of this poor old man!"

"Does it disgrace anybody," said Little Dorrit, very gently, "to take care of this poor old man?"

"Yes, miss," returned her sister, "and you ought to know it does. And you do know it does. And you do it because you know it does. The principal pleasure of your life is to remind your family of their misfortunes. And the next great pleasure of your existence is to keep low company. But, however, if you have no sense of decency, I have. You'll please to allow me to go on the other side of the way, unmolested."

With this, she bounced across to the opposite pavement. The old disgrace, who had been deferentially bowing a pace or two off (for Little Dorrit had let his arm go in her wonder, when Fanny began), and who had been hustled and cursed by impatient passengers for stopping the way, rejoined his companion, rather giddy, and said, "I hope nothing's wrong with your honored father, Miss? I hope there's nothing the matter in the honored family?"

"No, no," returned Little Dorrit. "No, thank you. Give me your arm again, Mr. Nandy. We shall soon be there now."

So, she talked to him as she had talked before, and they came to the Lodge and found Mr. Chivery on the lock, and went in. Now, it happened that the Father of the Marshalsea was sauntering towards the Lodge at the moment when they were coming out of it, entering the Prison arm in arm. As the spectacle of their approach met his view, he displayed the utmost agitation and despondency of mind; and—altogether regardless of old Nandy, who, making his reverence, stood with his hat in his hand, as he always did in that gracious presence—turned about, and hurried in at his own doorway and up the staircase.

Leaving the old unfortunate, whom in an evil hour she had taken under her protection, with a hurried promise to return to him directly, Little Dorrit hastened after her father, and, on the staircase, found Fanny following her, and flouncing up with offended dignity. The three came into the room almost together; and the Father sat down in his chair, buried his face in his hands, and uttered a groan.

"Of course," said Fanny. "Very proper. Poor, afflicted Pa! Now, I hope you believe me, Miss!"

"What is it, father?" cried Little Dorrit, bending over him. "Have I made you unhappy, father? Not I, I hope!"

"You hope, indeed! I dare say! Oh, you"—Fanny paused for a sufficiently strong expression—"you Common-minded little Amy! You complete prison-child!"

He stopped these angry reproaches with a wave of his hand, and

sobbed out, raising his face, and shaking his melancholy head at his younger daughter, "Amy, I know that you are innocent in intention. But you have cut me to the soul."

"Innocent in intention!" the implacable Fanny struck in. "Stuff in intention! Low in intention! Lowering of the family in intention!"

"Father!" cried Little Dorrit, pale and trembling, "I am very sorry. Pray forgive me. Tell me how it is, that I may not do it again!"

"How it is, you prevaricating little piece of goods!" cried Fanny. "You know how it is. I have told you already, so don't fly in the face of Providence by attempting to deny it!"

"Hush! Amy," said the father, passing his pocket-handkerchief several times across his face, and then grasping it convulsively in the hand that dropped across his knee, "I have done what I could to keep you select here; I have done what I could to retain you a position here. I may have succeeded; I may not. You may know it; you may not. I give no opinion. I have endured everything here but humiliation. That I have happily been spared—until this day."

Here his convulsive grasp unclosed itself, and he put his pocket-handkerchief to his eyes again. Little Dorrit, on the ground beside him, with her imploring hand upon his arm, watched him remorsefully. Coming out of his fit of grief, he clenched his pocket-handkerchief once more.

"Humiliation I have happily been spared until this day. Through all my troubles there has been that—Spirit in myself, and that—that submission to it, if I may use the term, in those about me, which has spared me—ha—humiliation. But this day, this minute, I have keenly felt it."

"Of course! How could it be otherwise!" exclaimed the irrepressible Fanny. "Careering and prancing about with a Pauper!" (air-gun again).

"But, dear father," cried Little Dorrit, "I don't justify myself for having wounded your dear heart—no! Heaven knows I don't!" She clasped her hands in quite an agony of distress. "I do nothing but beg and pray you to be comforted, and overlook it. But if I had not known that you were kind to the old man yourself, and took much notice of him, and were always glad to see him, I would not have come here with him, father, I would not indeed. What I have been so unhappy as to do, I have done in mistake. I would not wilfully bring a tear to your eyes, dear love!" said Little Dorrit, her heart well nigh broken, "for anything the world could give me, or anything it could take away."

Fanny, with a partly angry and partly repentant sob, began to cry herself, and to say—as this young lady always said when she was half in a passion and half out of it, half-spiteful with herself and half-spiteful with everybody else—that she wished she was dead.

The Father of the Marshalsea in the meantime took his younger daughter to his breast, and patted her head.

"There, there! Say no more, Amy, say no more, my child. I

will forget it as soon as I can. I," with hysterical cheerfulness, "I—shall soon be able to dismiss it. It is perfectly true, my dear, that I *am* always glad to see my old pensioner—as such, as such—and that I do—ha—extend as much protection and kindness to the—hum—the bruised reed—I trust I may so call him without impropriety—as in my circumstances, I can. It is quite true that this is the case, my dear child. At the same time, I preserve in doing this, if I may—ha—if I may use the expression—Spirit. Becoming Spirit. And there are some things which are," he stopped to sob, "irreconcilable with that, and wound that—wound it deeply. It is not that I have seen my good Amy attentive, and—ha—condescending to my old pensioner—it is not that that hurts me. It is, if I am to close the painful subject by being explicit, that I have seen my child, my own child, my own daughter, coming into this College out of the public streets—smiling! smiling!—arm in arm with—O my God, a livery!"

This reference to the coat of no cut and no time, the unfortunate gentleman gasped forth, in a scarcely audible voice, and with his clenched pocket-handkerchief raised in the air. His excited feelings might have found some further painful utterance, but for a knock at the door, which had been already twice repeated, and to which Fanny (still wishing herself dead, and indeed now going so far as to add, buried) cried "Come in!"

"Ah, Young John!" said the Father, in an altered and calmed voice. "What is it, Young John?"

"A letter for you, sir, being left in the Lodge just this minute, and a message with it, I thought, happening to be there myself, sir, I would bring it to your room." The speaker's attention was much distracted by the piteous spectacle of Little Dorrit at her father's feet, with her head turned away.

"Indeed, John? Thank you."

"The letter is from Mr. Clennam, sir—it's the answer—and the message was, sir, that Mr. Clennam also sent his compliments, and word that he would do himself the pleasure of calling this afternoon, hoping to see you, and likewise" attention more distracted than before "Miss Amy."

"Oh!" As the Father glanced into the letter (there was a bank-note in it), he reddened a little, and patted Amy on the head afresh. "Thank you, Young John. Quite right. Much obliged to you for your attention. No one waiting?"

"No, sir, no one waiting."

"Thank you, John. How is your mother, Young John?"

"Thank you, sir, she's not quite as well as we could wish—in fact, we none of us are, except father—but she's pretty well, sir."

"Say we sent our remembrances, will you? Say, kind remembrances, if you please, Young John."

"Thank you, sir, I will." And Mr. Chivery, junior, went his way, having spontaneously composed on the spot an entirely new epitaph for himself, to the effect that Here lay the body of John Chivery, Who, Having at such a date, Beheld the idol of his life, In grief and tears, And feeling unable to bear the harrowing spectacle, Immediately

repaired to the abode of his inconsolable parents, And terminated his existence, By his own rash act.

"There, there, Amy!" said the Father, when Young John had closed the door, "let us say no more about it." The last few minutes had improved his spirits remarkably, and he was quite lightsome. "Where is my old pensioner all this while? We must not leave him by himself any longer, or he will begin to suppose he is not welcome, and that would pain me. Will you fetch him, my child, or shall I?"

"If you wouldn't mind, father," said Little Dorrit, trying to bring her sobbing to a close.

"Certainly I will go, my dear. I forgot; your eyes are rather red. There! Cheer up, Amy. Don't be uneasy about me. I am quite myself again, my love, quite myself. Go to your room, Amy, and make your face look comfortable and pleasant to receive Mr. Clennam."

"I would rather stay in my own room, Father," returned Little Dorrit, finding it more difficult than before to regain her composure. "I would far rather not see Mr. Clennam."

"Oh, fie, fie, my dear, that's folly. Mr. Clennam is a very gentlemanly man—very gentlemanly. A little reserved at times; but I will say extremely gentlemanly. I couldn't think of your not being here to receive Mr. Clennam, my dear, especially this afternoon. So go and freshen yourself up, Amy; go and freshen yourself up, like a good girl."

Thus directed, Little Dorrit dutifully rose and obeyed: only pausing for a moment as she went out of the room, to give her sister a kiss of reconciliation. Upon which, that young lady, feeling much harassed in her mind, and having for the time worn out the wish with which she generally relieved it, conceived and executed the brilliant idea of wishing old Nandy dead, rather than that he should come bothering there like a disgusting, tiresome, wicked wretch, and making mischief between two sisters.

The Father of the Marshalsea, even humming a tune, and wearing his black velvet cap a little on one side, so much improved were his spirits, went down into the yard, and found his old pensioner standing hat in hand just within the gate, as he had stood all this time. "Come, Nandy!" said he, with great suavity. "Come up-stairs, Nandy; you know the way; why don't you come up stairs?" He went the length, on this occasion, of giving him his hand, and saying, "How are you, Nandy? Are you pretty well?" To which that vocalist returned, "I thank you, honored sir, I am all the better for seeing your honor." As they went along the Yard, the Father of the Marshalsea presented him to a Collegian of recent date. "An old acquaintance of mine, sir, an old pensioner." And then said, "Be covered, my good Nandy; put your hat on," with great consideration.

His patronage did not stop here; for he charged Maggy to get the tea ready, and instructed her to buy certain tea cakes, fresh butter, eggs, cold ham, and shrimps: to purchase which collation, he gave her a bank note for ten pounds, laying strict injunctions on her to be careful of the change. These preparations were in an advanced stage of progress, and his daughter Amy had come back with her work,

when Clennam presented himself. Whom he most graciously received, and besought to join their meal.

"Amy, my love, you know Mr. Clennam even better than I have the happiness of doing. Fanny, my dear, you are acquainted with Mr. Clennam." Fanny acknowledged him haughtily; the position she tacitly took up in all such cases being that there was a vast conspiracy to insult the family by not understanding it, or sufficiently deferring to it, and here was one of the conspirators. "This, Mr. Clennam, you must know, is an old pensioner of mine, old Nandy, a very faithful old man." (He always spoke of him as an object of great antiquity, but he was two or three years younger than himself.) "Let me see. You know Plornish, I think? I think my daughter Amy has mentioned to me that you know poor Plornish?"

"Oh yes!" said Arthur Clennam.

"Well, sir, this is Mrs. Plornish's father."

"Indeed? I am glad to see him."

"You would be more glad if you knew his many good qualities, Mr. Clennam."

"I hope I shall come to know them, through knowing him," said Arthur, secretly pitying the bowed and submissive figure.

"It is a holiday with him, and he comes to see his old friends who are always glad to see him," observed the Father of the Marshalsea. Then he added behind his hand, "Union, poor old fellow. Out for the day."

By this time Maggy, quietly assisted by her Little Mother, had spread the board, and the repast was ready. It being hot weather and the prison very close, the window was as wide open as it could be pushed. "If Maggy will spread that newspaper on the window-sill, my dear," remarked the Father complacently and in a half whisper to Little Dorrit, "my old pensioner can have his tea there, while we are having ours."

So, with a gulf between him and the good company of about a foot in width, standard measure, Mrs. Plornish's father was handsomely regaled. Clennam had never seen anything like his magnanimous protection by that other Father, he of the Marshalsea; and was lost in the contemplation of its many wonders.

The most striking of these was perhaps the relishing manner in which he remarked on the pensioner's infirmities and failings. As if he were a gracious Keeper, making a running commentary on the decline of the harmless animal he exhibited.

"Not ready for more ham yet, Nandy? Why, how slow you are! (His last teeth," he explained to the company, "are going, poor old boy.")

At another time, he said, "No shrimps, Nandy?" and on his not instantly replying, observed, ("His hearing is becoming very defective. He'll be deaf directly.")

At another time, he asked him, "Do you walk much, Nandy, about the yard within the walls of that place of yours?"

"No, sir; no. I haven't any great liking for that."

"No, to be sure," he assented. "Very natural." Then he privately informed the circle ("Legs going.")

Once, he asked the pensioner, in that general clemency which asked him anything to keep him afloat, how old his younger grandchild was?

"John Edward," said the pensioner, slowly laying down his knife and fork to consider. "How old, sir? Let me think now."

The Father of the Marshalsea tapped his forehead. ("Memory weak.")

"John Edward, sir? Well, I really forget. I could'n't say, at this minute, sir, whether it's two and two months, or whether it's two and five months. It's one or the other."

"Don't distress yourself by worrying your mind about it," he returned, with infinite forbearance. ("Faculties evidently decaying—old man rusts in the life he leads!")

The more of these discoveries that he persuaded himself he made in the pensioner, the better he appeared to like him; and when he got out of his chair after tea, to bid the pensioner good-bye, on his intimating that he feared, honored sir, his time was running out, he made himself look as erect and strong as possible.

"We don't call this a shilling, Nandy, you know," he said, putting one in his hand. "We call it tobacco."

"Honored sir, I thank you. It shall buy tobacco. My thanks and duty to Miss Amy and Miss Fanny. I wish you good-night, Mr. Clennam."

"And mind you don't forget us, you know, Nandy," said the Father. "You must come again, mind, whenever you have an afternoon. You must not come out without seeing us, or we shall be jealous. Good-night, Nandy. Be very careful how you descend the stairs, Nandy; they are rather uneven and worn." With that he stood on the landing, watching the old man down; and when he came into the room again, said, with a solemn satisfaction on him, "A melancholy sight that, Mr. Clennam, though one has the consolation of knowing that he doesn't feel it himself. The poor old fellow is a dismal wreck. Spirit broken and gone—pulverised—crushed out of him, sir, completely!"

As Clennam had a purpose in remaining, he said what he could responsive to these sentiments, and stood at the window with their enunciator, while Maggy and her Little Mother washed the tea-service and cleared it away. He noticed that his companion stood at the window with the air of an affable and accessible Sovereign, and that, when any of his people in the yard below looked up, his recognition of their salutes just stopped short of a blessing.

When Little Dorrit had her work on the table, and Maggy hers on the bedstead, Fanny fell to tying her bonnet as a preliminary to her departure. Arthur, still having his purpose, still remained. At this time the door opened, without any notice, and Mr. Tip came in. He kissed Amy as she started up to meet him, nodded to Fanny, nodded to his father, gloomed on the visitor without further recognition, and sat down.

"Tip, dear," said Little Dorrit mildly, shocked by this, "don't you see—"

"Yes, I see, Amy. If you refer to the presence of any visitor you

have here—I say, if you refer to that,” answered Tip, jerking his head with emphasis towards his shoulder nearest Clennam, “I see!”

“Is that all you say?”

“That’s all I say. And I suppose,” added the lofty young man, after a moment’s pause, “the visitor will understand me, when I say that’s all I say. In short, I suppose the visitor will understand, that he hasn’t used me like a gentleman.”

“I do not understand that,” observed the obnoxious personage referred to, with tranquillity.

“No? Why, then, to make it clearer to you, sir, I beg to let you know, that when I address what I call a properly-worded appeal, and an urgent appeal, and a delicate appeal, to an individual, for a small temporary accommodation, easily within his power—easily within his power, mind!—and when that individual writes back word to me that he begs to be excused, I consider that he doesn’t treat me like a gentleman.”

The Father of the Marshalsea, who had surveyed his son in silence, no sooner heard this sentiment, than he began, in an angry voice:

“How dare you—” But his son stopped him.

“Now, don’t ask me how I dare, father, because that’s bosh. As to the fact of the line of conduct I choose to adopt towards the individual present, you ought to be proud of my showing a proper spirit.”

“I should think so!” cried Fanny.

“A proper spirit?” said the father. “Yes, a proper spirit; a becoming spirit. Is it come to this, that my son teaches me—*me*—spirit!”

“Now, don’t let us bother about it, father, or have any row on the subject. I have fully made up my mind that the individual present has not treated me like a gentleman. And there’s an end of it.”

“But there is not an end of it, sir,” returned the father. “But there shall not be an end of it. You have made up your mind? You have made up your mind?”

“Yes, *I* have. What’s the good of keeping on like that?”

“Because,” returned the Father, in a great heat, “you had no right to make up your mind to what is monstrous, to what is—ha—immoral, to what is—hum—parricidal. No, Mr. Clennam, I beg, sir. Don’t ask me to desist; there is a—hum—a general principle involved here, which rises even above considerations of—ha—hospitality. I object to the assertion made by my son. I—ha—I personally repel it.”

“Why, what is it to you, father?” returned the son, over his shoulder.

“What is it to me, sir? I have a—hum—a spirit, sir, that will not endure it. I,” he took out his pocket-handkerchief again and dabbed his face, “I am outraged and insulted by it. Let me suppose the case that I myself may at a certain time—ha—or times, have made a—hum—an appeal, and a properly-worded appeal, and a delicate appeal, and an urgent appeal, to some individual for a small temporary accommodation. Let me suppose that that accommodation could have been easily extended, and was not extended, and that that

individual informed me that he begged to be excused. Am I to be told by my own son, that I therefore received treatment not due to a gentleman, and that I—ha—I submitted to it?"

His daughter Amy gently tried to calm him, but he would not on any account be calmed. He said his spirit was up, and wouldn't endure this.

Was he to be told that, he wished to know again, by his own son, on his own hearth, to his own face? Was that humiliation to be put upon him by his own blood?

"You are putting it on yourself, father, and getting into all this injury of your own accord," said the young gentleman morosely. "What I have made up my mind about, has nothing to do with you. What I said, had nothing to do with you. Why need you go trying on other people's hats?"

"I reply it has everything to do with me," returned the Father. "I point out to you, sir, with indignation, that—hum—the—ha—delicacy and peculiarity of your father's position should strike you dumb, sir, if nothing else should, in laying down such—ha—such unnatural principles. Besides; if you are not filial, sir, if you discard that duty, are you at least—hum—not a Christian? Are you—ha—an Atheist? And is it Christian, let me ask you, to stigmatise and denounce an individual for begging to be excused this time, when the same individual may—ha—respond with the required accommodation next time? Is it the part of a Christian not to—hum—not to try him again?" He had worked himself into quite a religious glow and fervor.

"I see precious well," said Mr. Tip, rising, "that I shall get no sensible or fair argument here to-night, and so the best thing I can do is to cut. Good night, Amy. Don't be vexed. I am very sorry it happens here, and you here, upon my soul I am; but I can't altogether part with my spirit, even for your sake, old girl."

With those words he put on his hat and went out, accompanied by Miss Fanny; who did not consider it spirited on her part to take leave of Clennam with any less opposing demonstration than a stare, importing that she had always known him for one of the large body of conspirators.

When they were gone, the Father of the Marshalsea was at first inclined to sink into despondency again, and would have done so, but that a gentleman opportunely came up within a minute or two to attend him to the Snuggery. It was the gentleman Clennam had seen on the night of his own accidental detention there, who had that impalpable grievance about the misappropriated Fund on which the Marshal was supposed to batten. He presented himself as a deputation to escort the Father to the Chair; it being an occasion on which he had promised to preside over the assembled Collegians, in the enjoyment of a little Harmony.

"Such, you see, Mr. Clennam," said the Father, "are the incongruities of my position here. But a public duty! No man, I am sure, would more readily recognise a public duty than yourself."

Clennam besought him not to delay a moment.

"Amy, my dear, if you can persuade Mr. Clennam to stay longer,

I can leave the honors of our poor apology for an establishment, with confidence in your hands, and perhaps you may do something towards erasing from Mr. Clennam's mind the—ha—untoward and unpleasant circumstance which has occurred since tea-time."

Clennam assured him that it had made no impression on his mind, and therefore required no erasure.

"My dear sir," said the Father, with a removal of his black cap and a grasp of Clennam's hand, combining to express the safe receipt of his note and enclosure that afternoon, "Heaven ever bless you!"

So, at last, Clennam's purpose in remaining was attained, and he could speak to Little Dorrit with nobody by. Maggy counted as nobody, and she was by.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MORE FORTUNE-TELLING.

MAGGY sat at her work in her great white cap, with its quantity of opaque frilling hiding what profile she had (she had none to spare), and her serviceable eye brought to bear upon her occupation, on the window side of the room. What with her flapping cap, and what with her unserviceable eye, she was quite partitioned off from her Little Mother, whose seat was opposite the window. The tread and shuffle of feet on the pavement of the yard had much diminished since the taking of the Chair; the tide of Collegians having set strongly in the direction of Harmony. Some few who had no music in their souls, or no money in their pockets, dawdled about; and the old spectacle of the visitor-wife and the depressed unseasoned prisoner still lingered in corners, as broken cobwebs and such unsightly discomforts draggle in corners of other places. It was the quietest time the College knew, saving the night-hours when the Collegians took the benefit of the act of sleep. The occasional rattle of applause upon the tables of the Snuggery, denoted the successful termination of a morsel of Harmony; or the responsive acceptance, by the united children, of some toast or sentiment offered to them by their Father. Occasionally, a vocal strain more sonorous than the generality informed the listener that some boastful bass was in blue water, or in the hunting-field, or with the rein-deer, or on the mountain, or among the heather; but the Marshal of the Marshalsea knew better, and had got him hard and fast.

As Arthur Clennam moved to sit down by the side of Little Dorrit, she trembled so that she had much ado to hold her needle. Clennam gently put his hand upon her work, and said "Dear Little Dorrit, let me lay it down."

She yielded it to him, and he put it aside. Her hands were then nervously clasping together, but he took one of them.

"How seldom I have seen you lately, Little Dorrit!"

"I have been busy, sir."

"But I heard only to-day," said Clennam, "by mere accident, of your having been with those good people close by me. Why not come to me, then?"

"I—I don't know. Or rather, I thought you might be busy too. You generally are now, are you not?"

He saw her trembling little form and her downcast face, and the eyes that drooped the moment they were raised to his—he saw them almost with as much concern as tenderness.

"My child, your manner is so changed!"

The trembling was now quite beyond her control. Softly withdrawing her hand, and laying it in her other hand, she sat before him with her head bent and her whole form trembling.

"My own Little Dorrit," said Clennam, compassionately.

She burst into tears. Maggy looked round of a sudden, and stared for at least a minute; but did not interpose. Clennam waited some little while before he spoke again.

"I cannot bear," he said then, "to see you weep; but I hope this is a relief to an overcharged heart."

"Yes it is, sir. Nothing but that."

"Well, well! I feared you would think too much of what passed here just now. It is of no moment; not the least. I am only unfortunate to have come in the way. Let it go by with these tears. It is not worth one of them. One of them? Such an idle thing should be repeated, with my glad consent, fifty times a day, to save you a moment's heart-ache, Little Dorrit."

She had taken courage now, and answered, far more in her usual manner, "You are so good! But even if there was nothing else in it to be sorry for and ashamed of, it is such a bad return to you——"

"Hush!" said Clennam, smiling and touching her lips with his hand. "Forgetfulness in you, who remember so many and so much, would be new indeed. Shall I remind you that I am not, and that I never was, anything but the friend whom you agreed to trust? No. You remember it, don't you?"

"I try to do so, or I should have broken the promise just now, when my mistaken brother was here. You will consider his bringing-up in this place, and will not judge him hardly, poor fellow, I know!" In raising her eyes with these words, she observed his face more nearly than she had done yet, and said, with a quick change of tone, "You have not been ill, Mr. Clennam?"

"No."

"Nor tried? Nor hurt?" she asked him, anxiously.

It fell to Clennam, now, to be not quite certain how to answer. He said in reply:

"To speak the truth, I have been a little troubled, but it is over. Do I show it so plainly? I ought to have more fortitude and self-command than that. I thought I had. I must learn them of you. Who could teach me better!"

He never thought that she saw in him what no one else could see.

He never thought that in the whole world there were no other eyes that looked upon him with the same light and strength as hers.

"But it brings me to something that I wish to say," he continued, "and therefore I will not quarrel even with my own face for telling tales and being unfaithful to me. Besides, it is a privilege and pleasure to confide in my Little Dorrit. Let me confess then, that, forgetting how grave I was, and how old I was, and how the time for such things had gone by me with the many years of sameness and little happiness that made up my long life far away, without marking it—that, forgetting all this, I fancied I loved some one."

"Do I know her, sir?" asked Little Dorrit.

"No, my child."

"Not the lady who has been kind to me for your sake?"

"Flora. No, no. Did you think——"

"I never quite thought so," said Little Dorrit, more to herself than him. "I did wonder at it a little."

"Well!" said Clennam, abiding by the feeling that had fallen on him in the avenue on the night of the roses, the feeling that he was an older man, who had done with that tender part of life, "I found out my mistake, and I thought about it a little—in short, a good deal—and got wiser. Being wiser, I counted up my years, and considered what I am, and looked back, and looked forward, and found that I should soon be grey. I found that I had climbed the hill, and passed the level ground upon the top, and was descending quickly."

If he had known the sharpness of the pain he caused the patient heart, in speaking thus! While doing it, too, with the purpose of easing and serving her.

"I found that the day when any such thing would have been graceful in me, or good in me, or hopeful or happy for me, or any one in connexion with me, was gone, and would never shine again."

O! If he had known, if he had known! If he could have seen the dagger in his hand, and the cruel wounds it struck in the faithful bleeding breast of his Little Dorrit!

"All that is over, and I have turned my face from it. Why do I speak of this to Little Dorrit? Why do I show you, my child, the space of years that there is between us, and recal to you that I have passed, by the amount of your whole life, the time that is present to you?"

"Because you trust me, I hope. Because you know that nothing can touch you, without touching me; that nothing can make you happy or unhappy, but it must make me, who am so grateful to you, the same."

He heard the thrill in her voice, he saw her earnest face, he saw her clear true eyes, he saw the quickened bosom that would have joyfully thrown itself before him to receive a mortal wound directed at his breast, with the dying cry, "I love him!" and the remotest suspicion of the truth never dawned upon his mind. No. He saw the devoted little creature with her worn shoes, in her common dress, in her jail-home; a slender child in body, a strong heroine in soul; and the light of her domestic story made all else dark to him.

"For those reasons assuredly, Little Dorrit, but for another too. So far removed, so different, and so much older, I am the better fitted for your friend and adviser. I mean, I am the more easily to be trusted; and any little constraint that you might feel with another, may vanish before me. Why have you kept so retired from me? Tell me."

"I am better here. My place and use are here. I am much better here," said Little Dorrit, faintly.

"So you said that day, upon the bridge. I thought of it much afterwards. Have you no secret you could entrust to me, with hope and comfort, if you would?"

"Secret? No, I have no secret," said Little Dorrit, in some trouble.

They had been speaking in low voices; more because it was natural to what they said, to adopt that tone, than with any care to reserve it from Maggy at her work. All of a sudden Maggy stared again, and this time spoke:

"I say! Little Mother!"

"Yes, Maggy."

"If you an't got no secret of your own to tell him, tell him that about the Princess. *She* had a secret, you know."

"The Princess had a secret?" said Clennam, in some surprise.

"What Princess was that, Maggy?"

"Lor! How you do go and bother a gal of ten," said Maggy, "catching the poor thing up in that way. Whoever said the Princess had a secret? I never said so."

"I beg your pardon. I thought you did."

"No, I didn't. How could I, when it was her as wanted to find it out? It was the little woman as had the secret, and she was always a spinning at her wheel. And so she says to her, why do you keep it there? And so, the t'other one says to her, no I don't; and so, the t'other one says to her, yes, you do; and then they both goes to the cupboard, and there it is. And she wouldn't go into the Hospital, and so she died. *You* know, Little Mother; Tell him that. For it was a reg'lar good secret, that was!" cried Maggy, hugging herself.

Arthur looked at Little Dorrit for help to comprehend this, and was struck by seeing her so timid and red. But, when she told him that it was only a Fairy Tale she had one day made up for Maggy, and that there was nothing in it which she wouldn't be ashamed to tell again to anybody else, even if she could remember it, he left the subject where it was.

However, he returned to his own subject, by first entreating her to see him oftener, and to remember that it was impossible to have a stronger interest in her welfare than he had, or to be more set upon promoting it than he was. When she answered fervently, she well knew that, she never forgot it, he touched upon his second and more delicate point—the suspicion he had formed.

"Little Dorrit," he said, taking her hand again, and speaking lower than he had spoken yet, so that even Maggy in the small room could not hear him, "another word. I have wanted very much to say this

to you ; I have tried for opportunities. Don't mind me, who, for the matter of years, might be your father or your uncle. Always think of me as quite an old man. I know that all your devotion centres in this room, and that nothing to the last will ever tempt you away from the duties you discharge here. If I were not sure of it, I should, before now, have implored you, and implored your father, to let me make some provision for you in a more suitable place. But, you may have an interest—I will not say, now, though even that might be—may have, at another time, an interest in some one else; an interest not incompatible with your affection here."

She was very, very pale, and silently shook her head.

"It may be, dear Little Dorrit."

"No. No. No." She shook her head, after each slow repetition of the word, with an air of quiet desolation that he remembered long afterwards. The time came when he remembered it well, long afterwards, within those prison walls; within that very room.

"But, if it ever should be, tell me so, my dear child. Entrust the truth to me, point out the object of such an interest to me, and I will try with all the zeal, and honor, and friendship and respect that I feel for you, good Little Dorrit of my heart, to do you a lasting service."

"O thank you, thank you! But, O no, O no, O no!" She said this, looking at him with her work-worn hands folded together, and in the same resigned accents as before.

"I press for no confidence now. I only ask you to repose unhesitating trust in me."

"Can I do less than that, when you are so good!"

"Then you will trust me fully? Will have no secret unhappiness, or anxiety, concealed from me?"

"Almost none."

"And you have none now?"

She shook her head. But she was very pale.

"When I lie down to-night, and my thoughts come back—as they will, for they do every night, even when I have not seen you—to this sad place, I may believe that there is no grief beyond this room, now, and its usual occupants, which preys on Little Dorrit's mind?"

She seemed to catch at these words—that he remembered, too, long afterwards—and said, more brightly, "Yes, Mr. Clennam; yes, you may!"

The crazy staircase, usually not slow to give notice when any one was coming up or down, here creaked under a quick tread, and a further sound was heard upon it, as if a little steam-engine with more steam than it knew what to do with, were working towards the room. As it approached, which it did very rapidly, it labored with increased energy; and, after knocking at the door, it sounded as if it were stooping down and snorting in at the keyhole.

Before Maggy could open the door, Mr. Pancks, opening it from without, stood without a hat and with his bare head in the wildest condition, looking at Clennam and Little Dorrit, over her shoulder.

He had a lighted cigar in his hand, and brought with him airs of ale and tobacco smoke.

"Pancks the gipsey," he observed, out of breath, "fortune-telling."

He stood dingily smiling, and breathing hard at them, with a most curious air. As if, instead of being his proprietor's grubber, he were the triumphant proprietor of the Marshalsea, the Marshal, all the turnkeys, and all the Collegians. In his great self-satisfaction he put his cigar to his lips (being evidently no smoker), and took such a pull at it, with his right eye shut up tight for the purpose, that he underwent a convulsion of shuddering and choking. But even in the midst of that paroxysm, he still essayed to repeat his favorite introduction of himself, "Pa-ancks the gi-ipsey, fortune-telling."

"I am spending the evening with the rest of 'em," said Pancks. "I've been singing. I've been taking a part in White sand and grey sand. I don't know anything about it. Never mind. I'll take any part in anything. It's all the same, if you're loud enough."

At first, Clennam supposed him to be intoxicated. But, he soon perceived that though he might be a little the worse (or better) for ale, the staple of his excitement was not brewed from malt, or distilled from any grain or berry.

"How d'ye do, Miss Dorrit?" said Pancks. "I thought you wouldn't mind my running round, and looking in for a moment. Mr. Clennam I heard was here, from Mr. Dorrit. How are you, sir?"

Clennam thanked him, and said he was glad to see him so gay.

"Gay!" said Pancks. "I'm in wonderful feather, sir. I can't stop a minute, or I shall be missed, and I don't want 'em to miss me. —Eh, Miss Dorrit?"

He seemed to have an insatiate delight in appealing to her, and looking at her; excitedly sticking his hair up at the same moment, like a dark species of cockatoo.

"I haven't been here half-an-hour. I knew Mr. Dorrit was in the chair, and I said, 'I'll go and support him!' I ought to be down in Bleeding Heart Yard by rights; but I can worry them to-morrow. —Eh, Miss Dorrit?"

His little black eyes sparkled electrically. His very hair seemed to sparkle, as he roughened it. He was in that highly-charged state that one might have expected to draw sparks and snaps from him by presenting a knuckle to any part of his figure.

"Capital company here," said Pancks. —"Eh, Miss Dorrit?"

She was half afraid of him, and irresolute what to say. He laughed, with a nod towards Clennam.

"Don't mind him, Miss Dorrit. He's one of us. We agreed that you shouldn't take on to mind me before people, but we didn't mean Mr. Clennam. He's one of us. He's in it. An't you, Mr. Clennam?" —Eh, Miss Dorrit?"

The excitement of this strange creature was fast communicating itself to Clennam. Little Dorrit, with amazement, saw this, and observed that they exchanged quick looks.

"I was making a remark," said Pancks, "but I declare I forget

what it was. Oh, I know! Capital company here. I've been treating 'em all round.—Eh, Miss Dorrit?"

"Very generous of you," she returned, noticing another of the quick looks between the two.

"Not at all," said Pancks. "Don't mention it. I'm coming into my property, that's the fact. I can afford to be liberal. I think I'll give 'em a treat here. Tables laid in the yard. Bread in stacks. Pipes in faggots. Tobacco in hayloads. Roast beef and plum pudding for every one. Quart of double stout a head. Pint of wine too, if they like it, and the authorities give permission.—Eh, Miss Dorrit?"

She was thrown into such a confusion by his manner, or rather by Clennam's growing understanding of his manner (for she looked to him after every fresh appeal and cockatoo demonstration on the part of Mr. Pancks), that she only moved her lips in answer, without forming any word.

"And oh, by-the-by!" said Pancks. "You were to live to know what was behind us on that little hand of yours. And so you shall, you shall, my darling.—Eh, Miss Dorrit?"

He had suddenly checked himself. Where he got all the additional black prongs from, that now flew up all over his head, like the myriads of points that break out in the last change of a great firework, was a wonderful mystery.

"But I shall be missed;" he came back to that; "and I don't want 'em to miss me. Mr. Clennam, you and I made a bargain. I said you should find me stick to it. You shall find me stick to it now, sir, if you'll step out of the room a moment. Miss Dorrit, I wish you good night. Miss Dorrit, I wish you good fortune."

He rapidly shook her by both hands, and puffed down stairs. Arthur followed him with such a hurried step, that he had very nearly tumbled over him on the last landing, and rolled him down into the yard.

"What is it, for Heaven's sake!" Arthur demanded, when they burst out there both together.

"Stop a moment, sir. Mr. Rugg. Let me introduce him."

With those words he presented another man without a hat, and also with a cigar, and also surrounded with a halo of ale and tobacco smoke, which man, though not so excited as himself, was in a state which would have been akin to lunacy but for its fading into sober method when compared with the rampancy of Mr. Pancks.

"Mr. Clennam, Mr. Rugg," said Pancks. "Stop a moment. Come to the pump."

They adjourned to the pump. Mr. Pancks, instantly putting his head under the spout, requested Mr. Rugg to take a good strong turn at the handle. Mr. Rugg complying to the letter, Mr. Pancks came forth snorting and blowing to some purpose, and dried himself on his handkerchief.

"I am the clearer for that," he gasped to Clennam standing astonished. "But, upon my soul, to hear her father making speeches in that chair, knowing what we know, and to see her up in that room in that dress, knowing what we know, is enough to—give me a back, Mr. Rugg—a little higher, sir—that'll do!"

Then and there, on that Marshalsea pavement, in the shades of evening, did Mr. Pancks, of all mankind, fly over the head and shoulders of Mr. Rugg of Pentonville, General Agent, Accountant, and Recoverer of Debts. Alighting on his feet, he took Clennam by the button-hole, led him behind the pump, and pantingly produced from his pocket a bundle of papers. Mr. Rugg also pantingly produced from his pocket a bundle of papers.

"Stay!" said Clennam in a whisper. "You have made a discovery."

Mr. Pancks answered, with an unction which there is no language to convey, "We rather think so."

"Does it implicate any one?"

"How implicate, sir?"

"In any suppression, or wrong dealing of any kind?"

"Not a bit of it."

"Thank God!" said Clennam to himself. "Now, show me."

"You are to understand"—snorted Pancks, feverishly unfolding papers, and speaking in short high-pressure blasts of sentences, "Where's the Pedigree? Where's Schedule number four, Mr. Rugg? Oh! all right! Here we are.—You are to understand that we are this very day virtually complete. We shan't be legally for a day or two. Call it, at the outside, a week. We've been at it, night and day, for I don't know how long. Mr. Rugg, you know how long? Never mind. Don't say. You'll only confuse me. You shall tell her, Mr. Clennam. Not till we give you leave. Where's that rough total, Mr. Rugg? Oh! Here we are! There, sir! That's what you'll have to break to her. That man's your Father of the Marshalsea!"

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NORTON'S CAMOMILE PILLS,
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MOST CERTAIN PRESERVER OF HEALTH,
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AND ALL STOMACH COMPLAINTS,
AND, AS A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE,
PURIFIER OF THE BLOOD, AND A SWEETENER OF THE WHOLE SYSTEM.

DIGESTION is a weakness or want of power in the digestive juices in the stomach to convert what we eat and drink into healthy matter, for the proper nourishment of the whole system. It is caused by everything which weakens the system in general, or the stomach in particular. From it proceed nearly all the diseases to which we are liable; for it is very certain, that if we could always keep the stomach right we should rarely die by old age or accident. Indigestion produces a great variety of unpleasant sensations: amongst the most prominent of its miserable effects are a want of, or an inordinate appetite, sometimes attended with a constant craving for drink, a distension or swelling of enlargement of the stomach, flatulency, heartburn, pains in the stomach, acidity, unpleasant taste in the mouth, perhaps sicknesses, rumbling noise in the bowels: in some cases of depraved digestion there is nearly a complete disrelish for food, but still the appetite is not greatly impaired, as at the best period of meals persons so afflicted cannot eat heartily, although without much gratification; a long train of nervous symptoms are too frequent attendants, general debility, great languidness, and incapacity for exertion. The minds of persons so afflicted frequently become irritable and desponding, and great anxiety is observable in the countenance; they appear thoughtful, melancholy, and dejected, under great apprehension of some imaginary danger, will start at any unexpected noise or occurrence, and become so agitated that they require some time to calm and collect themselves; yet for this the mind is exhilarated without much

difficulty; pleasing events, society will for a time dissipate all appearance of disease; but the excitement produced by an agreeable change vanishes soon after the cause has gone by. Other symptoms are, violent palpitations, restlessness, the sleep disturbed by frightful dreams and startings, and affording little or no refreshment; occasionally there is much moaning, with a sense of weight and oppression upon the chest, nightmare, &c.

It is almost impossible to enumerate all the symptoms of this first invader upon the constitution, as in a hundred cases of *Indigestion* there will probably be something peculiar to each; but, be they what they may, they are all occasioned by the food becoming a burden rather than a support to the stomach; and in all its stages the medicine most wanted is that which will afford speedy and effectual assistance to the digestive organs, and give energy to the nervous and muscular systems,—nothing can more speedily or with more certainty effect so desirable an object than *Norton's Extract of Camomile Flowers*. The herb has from time immemorial been highly esteemed in England as a grateful anodyne, imparting an aromatic bitter to the taste, and a pleasing degree of warmth and strength to the stomach; and in all cases of indigestion, gout in the stomach, windy colic, and general weakness, it has for ages been strongly recommended by the most eminent practitioners as very useful and beneficial. The great, indeed only, objection to its use has been the large quantity of water which it takes to dissolve a small part of the flowers, and which must be taken with it into the

stomach. It requires a quarter of a pint of boiling water to dissolve the soluble portion of one drachm of Camomile Flowers; and, when one or even two ounces may be taken with advantage, it must at once be seen how impossible it is to take a proper dose of this wholesome herb in the form of tea; and the only reason why it has not long since been placed the very first in rank of all restorative medicines is, that in taking it the stomach has always been loaded with water, which tends in a great measure to counteract, and very frequently wholly to destroy the effect. It must be evident that loading a weak stomach with a large quantity of water, merely for the purpose of conveying into it a small quantity of medicine must be injurious; and that the medicine must possess powerful renovating properties only to counteract the bad effects likely to be produced by the water. Generally speaking, this has been the case with Camomile Flowers, a herb possessing the highest restorative qualities, and when properly taken, decidedly the most speedy restorer, and the most certain preserver of health.

These PILLS are wholly CAMOMILE, prepared by a peculiar process, accidentally discovered, and known only to the proprietor, and which he firmly believes to be one of the most valuable modern discoveries in medicine, by which all the essential and extractive matter of more than an ounce of the flowers is concentrated in four moderate sized pills. Experience has afforded the most ample proof that they possess all the fine aromatic and stomachic properties for which the herb has been esteemed; and, as they are taken into the stomach unencumbered by any diluting or indigestible substance, in the same degree has their benefit been more immediate and decided. Mild in their operation and pleasant in their effect, they may be taken at any age, and under any circumstance, without danger or inconvenience. A person exposed to cold and wet a whole day or night could not possibly receive any injury from taking them, but on the contrary, they would effectually prevent a cold being taken. After a long acquaintance with and strict observance of the medicinal properties of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, it is only doing them justice to say, that they are really the most valuable of all TONIC MEDICINES. By the word tonic is meant a medicine which

gives strength to the stomach sufficient to digest in proper quantities all wholesome food, which increases the power of every nerve and muscle of the human body, or, in other words invigorates the nervous and muscular systems. The solidity or firmness of the whole tissue of the body, which quickly follows the use of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, their certain and speedy effects in repairing the partial dilapidations from time, intemperance, and their lasting salutary influence on the whole frame, is most convincing, that in the smallest compass is contained the largest quantity of the tonic principle, of so peculiar a nature as to pervade the whole system, through which it diffuses health and strength sufficient to resist the formation of disease, and also to fortify the constitution against contagion; as such, the general use is strongly recommended as a preventative during the prevalence of malignant fever or other infectious diseases, and to persons attending sick rooms they are valuable, as in no one instance have they ever failed in preventing the taking of illness, even under the most trying circumstances.

As *Norton's Camomile Pills* are particularly recommended for all stomach complaints or indigestion, it will probably be expected that some advice should be given respecting diet, though after all that has been written upon the subject, after the publication of volume upon volume, after the countless essays on diet, as a means of prolonging life, it would be unnecessary to say more. We did not feel it our duty to make a humble endeavour of inducing the public to regard them not, but to adopt that course which is dictated by nature, by reason, and by common sense. Those persons who study the wholesomes, and are governed by the opinion of writers on diet, are uniformly both unhealthy in body and weak in mind. There can be no doubt that the palate is designed to inform us what is proper for the stomach, and of course that must best instruct us what food to take and what to avoid: we want no other adviser. Nothing can be more clear than that those articles which are agreeable to the taste were by nature intended for our food and sustenance, whether liquid or solid, foreign or of native production; if they are pure and unadulterated, no harm need be dreaded by the

use; they will only injure by abuse. Consequently, whatever the palate approves, eat and drink always in moderation but never in excess; keeping in mind that the first process of digestion is performed in the mouth, the second in the stomach; and that, in order that the stomach may be able to do its work properly, it is requisite the first process should be well performed; this consists in masticating or chewing the solid food, so as to break down and separate the fibres and small substances of meat and vegetables, mixing them well, and blending the whole together before they are swallowed; and it is particularly urged upon all to take plenty of time to their meals and never eat in haste. If you conform to this short and simple, but comprehensive advice, and find that there are various things which others eat and drink with pleasure and without inconvenience, and which would be pleasant to yourself only that they disagree, you may at once conclude that the fault is in the stomach, that it does not possess the power which it ought to do, that it wants assistance, and the sooner that assistance is afforded the better. A very short trial of this medicine will best prove how soon it will put the stomach in a condition to perform with ease all the work which nature intended for it. By its use you will soon be able to enjoy, in moderation, whatever is agreeable to the taste, and unable to name one individual article of food which disagrees with or sits unpleasantly on the stomach. Never forget that a small meal well digested affords more nourishment to the system than a large one, even of the same food, when digested imperfectly. Let the dish be ever so delicious, ever so enticing a variety offered, the bottle ever so enchanting, never forget that temperance tends to preserve health, and that health is the soul of enjoyment. But should an impropriety be at any time, or ever so often committed, by which the stomach becomes overloaded or disordered, render it immediate aid by taking a dose of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, which will so promptly as-

sist in carrying off the burden thus imposed upon it that all will soon be right again.

It is most certainly true that every person in his lifetime consumes a quantity of noxious matter, which if taken at one meal would be fatal; it is these small quantities of noxious matter, which are introduced into our food, either by accident or wilful adulteration, which we find so often upset the stomach, and not unfrequently lay the foundation of illness, and perhaps final ruination to health. To preserve the constitution, it should be our constant care, if possible, to counteract the effect of these small quantities of unwholesome matter; and whenever, in that way, an enemy to the constitution finds its way into the stomach, a friend should be immediately sent after it, which would prevent its mischievous effects, and expel it altogether; no better friend can be found, nor one which will perform the task with greater certainty than **NORTON'S CAMOMILE PILLS**. And let it be observed that the longer this medicine is taken the less it will be wanted; it can in no case become habitual, as its entire action is to give energy and force to the stomach, which is the spring of life, the source from which the whole frame draws its succour and support. After an excess of eating or drinking, and upon every occasion of the general health being at all disturbed, these **PILLS** should be immediately taken, as they will stop and eradicate disease at its commencement. Indeed, it is most confidently asserted, that by the timely use of this medicine only, and a common degree of caution, any person may enjoy all the comforts within his reach, may pass through life without an illness, and with the certainty of attaining a healthy **OLD AGE**.

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
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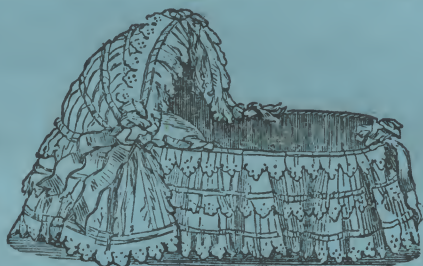
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